John the Unafraid

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John the Unafraid

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by
William Ernest Mason

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1910

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1910

PUBLISHED FEB. 26, 1910
ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL
LONDON

The Publishers' Press
Chicago

S244
111 381
70158

Chapter 1

N the seventh day of the seventh month, in the year of our Lord (being one of the years of the first quarter of the century), the nations were notified by the astronomers that a new planet had become visible, similar to but much larger than the sun, and that in just forty-two months it would strike and destroy the earth and every living thing thereon. At first, some doubted, but it was soon believed by all the people who dwelt upon the earth.

II When it became known that the end was fixed and that the world and everything thereon must surely pass away, there was great commotion and anguish among all the people.

III And all those who were idle and those who labored busied themselves with great fear. Those who tilled the soil left the fields and hastened to the cities, to talk and pray over the impending disaster. Many cursed the day of their birth, while many spent the day and night in fasting and prayer. The rich and powerful in all the earth took thought and besought men of science

for some way of escape, and travelled in haste from one astronomer to another, begging that a new examination be made, hoping for comfort therefrom.

IV Those who worshipped the Christ, gathered in church for constant prayer, and in the synagogue the disciples of Moses prayed for salvation to the Most High. Remote lands were full of fear, and in great trembling, the people called upon the Great Buddha and upon Confucius to aid them in their distress. In the large cities, the streets and byways were constantly thronged with those who called upon the Christ to come again and save the world, while others scoffed at them as they prayed, shouting into their ears: "Come, ye cowards, have ye not heard the mandate, 'Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow you die'?"

V Chaos reigned in all the earth. Each neglected his usual task, to seek and find his own safety. The sick, unfortunate, and tender were neglected and all the people were afraid.

VI Now there lived in one of the great cities a man, ripe in years, of a sad experience, strengthened with adversity, and with clean hands and a

pure heart. His name was John. He was a worker in wood for his daily bread, and among the poor, in his church and in the streets, he taught lessons of simple love and truth.

VII And in all the great city, John alone was undisturbed by the great fear that had overcome the people, and pursued his daily work, according to his custom, with great industry, sobriety, and honesty. He refused to quit his task during the hours of labor to meet for prayer, and gave to his church only his accustomed duty.

VIII And the Shepherd of his flock, and the members, mourned that John, so simple and devout, should neglect his soul's salvation; and on the second day of the week, his brethren called upon him, to save his soul, and found him not at prayer, but at work upon his home in the open air. His brethren knelt in the street, and in a loud voice lifted up their prayers for his soul, and when they had finished, he stood with uncovered head, and answered softly: "Amen and Amen."

IX Then one of the brethren called to him, saying: "John, come now with us to the house of prayer," and he answering, said: "This is a house of prayer. Herein are two poor families, who must

be better provided for and protected against the coming cold. My every wish to help is a prayer, and every nail I drive is an answer to that prayer."

X And the Shepherd said: "Have you heard that the end of the world is near, and in a few short years we all must die?" And John said, answering them: "Has it just come to your ears? Have ye not long ago read the message from the Master? Do you not know that what we call birth brings with it the seed that cannot fail, of that we call death? Alas, my brethren, ye have heard long since but did not heed the message."

XI And one of the brothers said unto John: "Brother, how canst thou blaspheme? You say that you, by your labor, answer prayer — God alone can answer prayer, according to our Scripture. Art thou God?"

XII Answering, he said: "If there be aught of unselfish good within me, that is God."

XIII And he came down among them, clad in the clothes of labor, and holding in his hands the implements of his toil, John said: "Be sure that

God is good. Who among you were invited to come to this world? Who among you were consulted or had the power to come or to stay as it pleased you? What more right have you to say whether you shall stay or go? Where is the faith so long and loudly talked about in our little church house? Of what value is the faith that will not stand the wrecking of worlds, the stars or the sun? Be still and know that God is good. But you cry, 'We are to be destroyed.' I say to you, nothing can be destroyed. God is jealous of all that comes from his hands."

XIV Then taking a shaving of wood, he lit it and held it before them that they might see it burn, saying: "It is burning and you say it is destroyed. The thing that you saw burning is changed but not destroyed. Everything in nature that helped to make it is still safe in the work shop of the Everlasting Good. What are the worlds or planets that we should fear or be mindful of them? They spin in their orbits, held by laws not of their making, and the loss of a thousand worlds is as nothing compared with the true greatness of one unselfish act. Be still and fear not, neither death nor hell — pray not

so much for Heaven for yourself, but serve, love, and honor those about you, and in this service you will find the peace that passeth understanding."

His brethren were amazed and could not answer, XV when one of the brothers said: "What would you have us do?" And John said to the Shepherd of the flock: "Within this block are two who are bedridden and neglected. Go and serve." To the others he said: "One should help me finish this day's labor, and be paid according to custom." To another: "You are under promise to do the work on the bench now long neglected." To the mothers, he said: "To your children and your homes. The Good looks for you there, and if you can pay all promises there, go to the poorer neighbor, and help her in her tasks, if need be, and show by your conduct that your faith makes you unafraid, and be sure that whenever you make an unselfish effort to comfort another, you will get a glimpse of the face of the Master."

And another cried to him: "What shall I do?" XVI And he said: "Each do what he has been doing, if it be honorable and just." And the minister

said: "I wish to be found on my knees in the house of prayer when the Master comes." And John said to them: "Again I say to you, every good wish is a prayer, and every good deed is an answer to prayer. Can ye feed the hungry or clothe the naked with prayer? There is of God in all of you, and you may be all of God if you can deliver yourselves from selfishness. Go to your work, seek opportunity to serve, and when the Master comes, it will be better to be found about His work answering prayer, than slothfully praying for yourself." And John went again to his labor, and the people departed, as if commanded, each to his own duty.

Chapter 2

ND on the next day, the judges and rulers of the courts, having heard of the man who was both faithful and unafraid, came to his home and sought speech with him. And John came out unto them, saying: "Why are ye not about your Master's business? Are ye not paid to adjust righteously the differences between your fellows? Is the work done before mid-day?" And one of the judges said: "We have little to do. Those who come to us insist that they are in the wrong — the debtor demanding the right to pay and the plaintiff demanding the right to forgive." Then John said: "Learn the truth and give judgment in justice and according to the law. If your brothers come into your court enemies and depart friends, then you have wrought for righteousness and need not fear."

II And one of the judges said: "What shall we do with these twoscore men crowded into our jail?" "Alas," said John, "are so many of our brothers sick?" "Not sick," answered the judge, "but wicked law breakers, guilty of great sin against

God and man." And John answered: "No, there is no sin save unkindness." "How say you," said the judge, "is the robber only unkind?" And John said: "Surely he is unkind to the one he robbed, and unkind to the mother who gave him birth. This unkindness is a sickness that may be cured if we set about the Master's work.

"Let us have a hospital and not the jail. When III
one of our brothers is taken sick with dangerous and contagious fever, do we surround him with stone and iron? No, we give him shelter, care, and companionship, to save his life, perchance. If there be danger to others, we confine them, but always ministering unto them.

"Our brothers in the jail are sick in mind. They IV
have heard but could not heed the message. They have looked for but could not see the truth, and understand the words of wisdom. Who among you, having a child, would confine him for years in a cell for one act of disobedience? Yet, I say to you, most of our sick brothers, though tall of stature, are children, full of childish ways, superstitions, and easily led to right or wrong.

V "Come ye, who judge, let us be about the Master's business. Ye are not there to hold the scales of justice as one who is the seller of salt, but the scales you hold must weigh men's souls and mothers' tears. If you find a brother too sick to be cured by you, and dangerous to others, put him not away in a dark cell in hatred. If he must, for public safety, be held behind the bars, let it be where he may have kindness from his fellow man; let it be so that he may sometimes see the trees and flowers; let him sometimes hear the voices of little children, and it may be that the sight of a star in heaven or the smiling face of infancy, may light anew the spark of God within him, which you men of wisdom and learning could not find."

VI Then one of the judges hastened to bring before John a prisoner, saying: "How now, John, in this wicked man, who is totally depraved, can you say there is a spark of God?" And the judge told of many crimes laid at the prisoner's door. And John said: "I know that he is made in the image of God, if we are; and see, as I speak to you, he strokes the head of the dog — yes, and smiles at the sight of an infant face. I give him

my hand. I call him brother, my poor, sick brother. Tears which cannot lie are in his eyes. Yes, verily, the spark of God is there. I beg you search for it. His very soul is sick and small. He seems almost in the last stages of the sickness of selfishness and unkindness, but let us have for him the best men to nurse him back to life. Confine him in kindness, as we do other sick brothers, but search for his poor little soul and in the labor of search you may find for yourself the jewel of immortality."

VII

Then one of the judges, questioning him, said: "Why say you his soul is small? Canst thou measure the soul of man?" And John, answering, said: "No, but have ye not heard the legend of the selfish man, who prayed that he might see and have his own soul for companion? His prayer was granted, and he beheld constantly at his side a figure so small, hateful, and decrepit that he denied to those he met that it was his soul, and each lie he told, his soul seemed to shrink and become more horrid and unsightly. One day he spoke kindly to a child, and did an unselfish act of charity, and behold, his soul grew larger and better to look upon. The next day he

visited the sick and one he knew in prison, and when he came home, his soul had a shining face and pleasant smile. ' Surely,' he said, ' I shall soon be unashamed of my soul.' Then he went about the Master's business; men, women, and children blessed him, and when the summons came to him, he was at peace — unafraid, and ready to meet his Master face to face.

VIII " Oh, ye judges of men, honored by your selection to give justice, let us be about the Master's business. The world is frightened because the end is near. Ye have learning and power. Speak, from your sacred desk, words of calmness to quiet the people and still their fears. Set the people back to their every honorable employment. Teach them that action is life and stagnation is death, that the world must work to prosper and progress. Teach those who labor to be faithful and those who hire to divide justly with the laborer, the fruits of his labor. Help us all to learn to do justice, and help one another. And who knoweth, but that even before the destruction of the world, the prayer of the Master may be answered and the will of the Father may be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

Chapter 3

ND it became known of many that John was unafraid, and that those who heard him found peace, and went back to their labors. And many came and waited in the street to have speech with him. Among them were many who were rich and afraid, saying: "Come, speak to us that we too may be unafraid. Say to us that we may build you a great and beautiful temple of worship, that you may speak to us all." And John answered: "We have too many temples now and too few houses. Change the temples to homes, and I will come to all who ask, and if so be I can serve, my blessings will be beyond my merits."

II And one of the ministers said: "How shall they be changed?" And John said: "Let never again the door of the Master's house be closed and locked against our brothers. For they, too, are the Master's brothers. In the last cold storm I saw these temples warmed and locked. Our brothers crowded in filth and cold, while the warmth and comfort of the temples were wasted.

In a vision, I passed through the city and seemed to read on each spire, 'Dedicated to the salvation of ourselves,' and on each door, 'Keep out the sick brothers of our Master.'

"Go, then, and open the doors, not on the first day of the week alone, but every day and every night. Many a brother may find a better bed in your cushioned pew than he ever found before. How can they consider the message if cold, hungry, and bodily sick? Go feed and clothe those who cannot serve themselves. Then tell them the story of the Master who was all kindness. Gratitude in prayers unspoken will reach nearer the throne of God, than ever before from your temple. Songs from the little brother's heart of joy will be sweeter to the Master than the organ's tone.

"Go ye, and bring them in; bring all the poor, unkind, and sick brothers of the Master. Your temples will have a new light and a new warmth, for in the midst of your service, the Master Himself will be with you."

And a rich merchant came to John, saying: "I, too, am unafraid. What more would you have me do? I have great wealth. I have provided

employment for thousands and have helped to build the city. I have prepared for the future. I go to church and support liberally the gospel's cause at home, and help to send missionaries to a far heathen land. I have entailed great wealth unto my children and my children's children." And John answered him, saying: "I see the people stand aside to wait for you to speak with me. They seem impressed with your much speaking. I, too, know your business. Who made your wealth for you? Have you divided fairly with your partners?"

VI And the great merchant cried: "I have no partners." And John said: "How say you no partners? I say to you every man and woman, every boy or girl, who has labored for you is your partner — again I say, how about your partners? How many of them have had their share of the earnings? How many of them have had a home and enough to educate their children? How many have become unkind and been forced to steal from underpay? How many children have helped you to get rich when you ought to have sent them to school? How many girls have fallen in shame because of your hard work and poor pay? How many partners have you turned out

to starve in their old age? Nay, my poor brother, you, too, are sick; your soul has almost been lost in unkindness; you boast of your justice, and have not tasted the sweet morsel of mercy.

"I must needs go now to mend the window of VII
a neighbor, according to promise. Go you and come again. You are wrong, when you say you are unafraid. Only the faithful are unafraid. Come again to-morrow and in kindness let us help each other. If my words were unkind, then find it in your heart to forgive me, as I do you. We have great need of each other, and the Good needs us all."

John went his way to his labor, but the merchant VIII
stayed and would not depart from the street before John's home. And in the evening, when John returned, he called to John: "Oh, my brother, my eyes are opened to my great unkindness. I will give all to my brothers, but first I must see my partners, who are still to be found." Then John embraced him, saying: "At my work to-day I feared my words had been unkind to you. Come into my home and rest and eat with me."

IX Now, John's bed and board were over his shop in the rear of his home, and answering the questions of the merchant, he said: "Yes, the house is called mine, and is so recorded, but it is the Master's house in the Great Books of Record.

X "I have neither wife nor child to provide for, and, having no need of so great a home, I rent it to two of our brothers. One of them is James and the other William. I have not known them long, but they are good brothers and are growing in kindness. I fear, alas, that I am impatient, though I daily preach that next to kindness, patience is the greatest virtue.

XI "My brother James's sickness is intemperance, unkindness to himself, and, therefore, unkindness to his wife and children; and now he sees the truth and heeds the message. My brother William's sickness is called indolence, and is as much a disease as a fever. Oh, my brother, help me — teach me to be as industrious and patient in the Master's business as you have been in yours — no, not your money — that is useful, but not here.

"To give to my brother William would be to poison the sick. He is just beginning to taste the sweet bread of his own labor. I have helped him to find work and praised him for doing it. He is learning to eat clean and simple food — he seems determined to educate his children. He is almost well. To give him money might bring back his sickness. To encourage him and teach him to earn, will make his cure complete." XII

And they talked together in great kindness until the hour of near midnight, and when the servants of the merchant knew that he was over the shop in the narrow alleyway, they drove his carriage back there to wait the merchant's pleasure. And when John looked out and saw them, he said: "Some one awaits your going. Who is it?" And the merchant said: "They were my partners, but I did not know it. Now I know that they are my partners and my brothers." And the merchant's name was Matthew, and the brothers John and Matthew parted in kindness. XIII

Chapter 4

ND when the morning came, Matthew went to his business and, calling his brethren together, said: "We have long been partners and always brothers. I have instructed you in honesty and justice. I have paid you the wage agreed. I have tried to be just but never generous. That which I have given in charity, to recommend this business to the people, was profit of our business, and as much yours as mine. That which I have saved was as much yours as mine. I have never shared with you the comfort of saving, nor the joy of giving. In this I have been wrong and ask your pardon.

II "From to-day all are brothers, and each of you shall share in our business. We all know now that the end of our world and our life is near. Last night I visited John the Unafraid, and shall follow him. We must continue all our honest work. An honest merchant is more useful and necessary each day. We shall work together for the good of this business and each other. None of our partners must lose his pay by sick-

ness, and I beg you to find all those who have served to build up this business, and are now aged and in want. We must pay them in full for past services. We shall all work who can, and help to cure the brothers who are sick with indolence.

III "You have worked too many hours daily, and I have taken your share of the profits. Hereafter, each will draw his share. Your necessities are the same as mine. In the great Master's scales, each soul is equal. According as you are faithful, you will be unafraid. Our three great rules of life shall be cheerfulness, patience, and kindness, these three, but the greatest of them is kindness. Remember this is our business now, and the Master commands diligence. Remember the saying of John the Unafraid, 'While every good wish is a prayer, every good deed is an answer to prayer,' and on the great day when Mother Earth is to change her form in the Father's workshop, we will salute the wreck of matter as calmly and fearlessly as we watch the flying clouds or the setting sun."

Chapter 5

ND the man John became known of many people, and many of his own faith and church went out into other places to quiet the people and teach the gospel of kindness and the faith that makes unafraid. Now the pastor of John's faith and some of the brethren grew vexed that John seemed to neglect his church duties and sometimes failed to attend the meetings for prayer, and when they learned that he was talking in political meetings, and preaching, and holding meetings in other churches and to people of other faiths, and the Jews and Catholics, even infidels, his people were sorely vexed and called him to account. John replied he was too busy with the Master's business to seek his own defence, and after a season of prayer and consideration, certain charges and complaints set out with accuracy were made against him.

II On the next first day, he went to his church, and when the charges had been made public, he, John, made answer, and said: "My brethren, I miss many of my brothers and sisters here to-day.

Where is my brother Samuel and his wife Mary?" and a brother answered: "They work and teach to-day in the county prison." "But where is my loyal brother George?" and the brother said: "To-day he visits the sick to teach them and comfort their souls from fear." But again he said: "Where are my brothers and sisters of my old Bible class?" and the elder said: "They are teaching on the streets." "But where," said John, "are the sweet voices we once heard singing here?" and the elder replied: "They are singing in the prison or in the hospital just now." And John said: "This is indeed answer to prayer. If we were all busy in the Master's work, we would seek out the great pools of filth and sickness, instead of seeking dust spots on the garments of our brothers. Oh, my dear little brothers, with what am I charged? I have heard at great length these charges, and I am blessed that nowhere am I charged with unkindness. I answer not in self, but in your defence.

"I am charged with assisting men into office; III
have ye not heard — can ye not remember that the Master commanded his disciples to 'render

unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's'? Is it kind to accept the protection of our dear country and fail in the duty of citizenship? I am complained against because I seek to teach and to learn from the Catholic. Shall a child speak ill of its mother? Shall the great tree, with spreading branches, hate the root from which it grew? Shall I quarrel and dispute with those I meet while working in the Master's business?

IV "Charged, am I, with seeking companionship in work with the Jews? Was not the Master Himself a Jew? Was it not His command to forgive? Shall I be delayed in my labor by discipline because I remember that commandment? Do they not worship the same Father that we do? Are not forgiveness and kindness the same word? Are they not, like ourselves, made in the image of God? Shall we continue, parrot-like, to recite the ten great commandments and forget the greatest one that fell from the Master's lips on Calvary?

V "I am charged with respecting the infidel, and seeking to learn and to teach those who do not believe in the divinity of the Master. My brothers, sometimes when I meet these infidels

and see them demanding character instead of creed, works and fearlessness instead of timid prayer for self-salvation, I wonder whether it is I or they who are infidels. Come, my brethren, where is any word of the Master that keeps us apart?

VI "Complaint is made that I teach in churches whose people do not believe with our creed in the future state. Are not some of us still sick with unkindness? Who of you, if you were about to sail on a long journey, would quarrel about a speck on the mast of your ship? Or, if we were all sailing to an unknown land, would we hate each other because we could not agree in thinking the same about a country we never saw? No, brothers, you cannot expel me from the great church. Every soul is a member, whether he will or not. Some are sick, but will be healed — some are blind, but will see — some are deaf, but will hear the message. This is the Master's business. The very least of these is our business. The streets are full of them, distressed in mind and body, and when every eye is dried from its tears, every body fed and clothed, when all the sick are well and all the dead are buried,

when the afflicted are all comforted, when the prisons are empty, when every son is dutiful to his mother, and every mother is happy in her son, when every debt we owe is paid, and every duty confronting us is discharged, then if it be to please some poor, sick brother not quite cured of his sickness, we may meet to solve the riddles, translate dreams, and in kindness guess at the soundness or unsoundness of our beliefs.

VII "I go now by agreement to help two of my sick brothers. Will some one come and help me? Come, it is more glorious than war, more beautiful than nature. In this struggle we forget all fear and all selfishness; in every hour of this battle we learn more of the heights and depths of the Everlasting Good."

Chapter 6

ON the next first day, John was teaching in another church on the salvation of the body. And when he had finished, the Shepherd of the flock begged him to declare unto the people as to his interpretation of the ordinance of Baptism. And John said: "I dare not interpret. I cannot read the words in the original text. Some say 'unto,' and others say 'into' the water.

II "Each should do as it is given him to read the message. Again I say, there is of God in all; you each must follow that, for if you deceive not yourselves, that unfailing good within you is a sure and infallible leader. If that directs one form or any form of Baptism, be thou true to the message, and kind to him who receives still another message.

III "Keep in obedience every message as it reaches you and you will be faithful and unafraid. Fear not disobedience to the message you cannot read and understand, nor waste time in worry about sounds that fall uncertain on your ears.

" One message alone can take all our time, ' Love thy neighbor as thyself.' Learn this message, and live it, and you shall have the baptism of fire, which only the Master can give." IV

And they called him to interpret to them the future life. John answered: " I dare not. I know that I, John, live. I am conscious of my own life and being, yet my own being is so full of wonder and mystery, which I do not understand, how can I speak truthfully of the deeper mysteries of the life unknown? V

" One day it was given to me to look into a microscope, and I saw the glory of an insect's wing, and the wonderful mechanism of its foot. That night I saw through a telescope the face of our moon, seeming so near I might hail it as we moved. I feel sure that below the insect's feet and above and beyond the moon are things which I cannot see. This is the limitation of my eyes. So we have the limitation of the mind. We may understand and measure the time from yesterday until to-morrow, yet the human mind cannot comprehend either the beginning or the end thereof. We may understand and measure the VI

space from my home to yours, yet the human mind cannot grasp its beginning or its end.

VII "This I know. In the time and space we occupy there is a harvest ripened to our very hands. What say you of the foolish man, who, having a full harvest to gather, sits himself down to weep and worry over the harvest for the coming autumn, or for the autumn that has passed? Come then, let us be about the Master's business. There are women in shame that you can help; there are men in the gutter you can save; there are hungry children who need you. Come into the field and gather the harvest, and it may be the plan of the Everlasting Good that if we gather faithfully the harvest of this life, we may unconsciously sow the seed of immortality for the harvest of the life to come."

VIII And they importuned him again, saying: "Do not leave us in doubt. Tell us, do you not believe we shall live again in a life beyond this?" And John said: "Last night I saw a man strike a woman and beat a child. Then, I fear, I did not believe. To-day I have seen men and women smiling and patiently at work in the Master's

business. To-day I have, with help, been able to reconcile husband and wife, father and son. To-day I have thought much of those great souls of men and women who have risen above the plant and the animal and unselfishly serve in sorrow and sacrifice. Therefore, to-day I have the faith of a little child, and with this faith I seem even now to have entered into the kingdom."

Chapter 7

S John went on his way, he met near his home his neighbor with his son. And his neighbor said: "I have brought here with me my son, who has disobeyed me and provoked me beyond human endurance. Again and again he has wasted my money in riotous living, and again and again I have forgiven him and given him money to pay his debts and start anew, each time with the same unhappy ending. I beg of you, my brother John, advise with us. He is bringing down his mother in sorrow to her grave. My patience is exhausted.

I "Tell me, John, is it not true that patience, about which you preach, may sometimes cease to be a virtue?" "No," said John, "that is an unwise saying, invented and used as an excuse for impatience."

II "But," cried his neighbor, "shall I give to my ungrateful son until I beggar myself?" And John answered: "Foolish giving is not evidence of patience. Giving may cease to be a virtue,

but patience never can. Giving may be so unwise and unkind as to injure those to whom you give. Have you not seen the fledgling forced by the mother bird from its nest? Was it lack of patience or wisdom that gave the young its lesson in flying? How is it with thee and this young man, thy son? Can you expect him to walk when you persist in carrying him in your arms? Let him try his legs, for he may yet learn to stand on them like a man." "Shall I abandon my son?" "No," said John, "that would show impatience. Let him understand that he cannot use your meagre savings to ruin himself and your family, to all of whom you owe an obligation. Let him know, in kindness, that if he is well, he must work or be hungry and unclad. Teach him, if you can, how sweet will be the bread of his own earning. Be patient, but do not injure him longer by carrying him on your back."

IV And John, turning to the young man, said: "How now is it with thee, my child? Why hatest thou thy father and thy mother?" And the young man said: "I hate them not. He who saith I hate my father or my mother lies, and there is no truth in him."

7 And John said: "My son, thy tongue saith one thing and thy conduct speaketh another. Thy tongue is soft of speech; thy conduct is louder than the passing train. Thy tongue saith 'I hate not my mother,' yet but a day since, I saw you drunk and heard your loud carousal on the street. I know not what your tongue said that day, but your conduct said, 'See me and hear my foul voice. I am my mother's son. See what she has done for the world. See how my mother has educated and trained her son.' I saw your mother pleading with you, and the neighbors turned away in shame and pity for her. Hadst thou beaten her with thy fist, she had not suffered so much as by your treatment. How say you now, which shall I believe: thy tongue or thy conduct?"

7I The young man failing of speech, John said: "Here, take my stick, and if thou must be cruel to her, strike her with that, but never again make her ashamed to look her neighbors in the face. I remember your birth, you are now in your young manhood. What a father and mother you have had; toiling for you, their life and hopes bound up in you. Time after time they have

nursed you from sickness back to health, and now how is it between them and thee — which shall I believe, thy conduct or thy tongue?"

VII

And the young man wept, saying: "I see now that mine eyes are opened. To-morrow I will begin again." And John said: "Not to-morrow. To-morrow is a long way off. The sun must set, the moon and stars come out, and all the miracles of creation must come and go before to-morrow. If thy tongue be true, come with me. I have a cot and plain food. You shall rest and eat as thou earnest it. I cannot yet trust you and your father together. You are both weak and sick. Before to-morrow you may again think you cannot walk, and your poor father may begin again to carry you, and call his weakness patience." And John placed his arm in kindness about the young man, and they passed on together.

Chapter 8

ND on the next day John worked with the young man and taught him in patience and kindness some parts of his trade, and in the evening, being worn and tired, he rested a while on his cot. And while sleeping, one of his brothers and two of the followers came in great haste to say that in his church that night one of their brothers was to be tried for many offences. And John arose from his bed and went to the church.

I And as he walked, his brother said: "Come, we must save one more of the sheep to-night." And John said: "I have no fear for the one poor, sick sheep on trial; my fear is for the whole flock." And Mark said to him: "You speak in riddles," and John said: "The great wolf of unkindness is bold indeed. He is not satisfied with one poor lamb, but seeks to occupy the whole fold and destroy the flock.

II "The Master's business to-night is indeed a serious task, but if we are loyal to our cause, we will neither faint nor fail."

And when John came into the house, they made way for him, and seated him where he could hear. And John sat listening to his brethren as they spoke for and against the accused. The brother accused had violated church discipline in many instances and confessed a crime against the State of conspiring to defraud his neighbor. He could offer but little in extenuation, and could only promise better conduct in the future, and pleaded for forgiveness, in which his wife and mother prayerfully joined. IV

Before the vote was taken, John arose and said: "Please be patient. I need your forgiveness for my much speaking. I shall not speak for the brother in disgrace, the tears of those who best know him, speak better than I. You, who would turn him away, are in danger of the great sickness we call unkindness. V

"Have you heard the legend of the Prince, a disciple of Buddha, the son of the King, he with the most beautiful eyes — sent by a wicked and jealous Queen to a distant part of the Kingdom, and cruelly deprived of his eyes? It took him a long time to work his way back to his father's VI

house, and he sang beneath his father's window. The King, thinking he knew the voice, sent for him, and when he saw the blind beggar, he knew him not. When the King learned the truth, in great anger he ordered the immediate death of the Queen. But his son fell on his knees, and begged forgiveness for the Queen, and lo! his sight came back again, and his eyes were more beautiful than ever. My brother here says, ''T is the tale of the heathen, and not true.' So it may be. I do not know that his eyes were given back to him, but this I do know, that if he found it in his heart to forgive so great a wrong, he found something that in the Great Day will be more blessed than eyes, and in the courts of the Master more lasting than the hills and more beautiful than the stars. A legend of the heathen again, my brother, says. How was it, then, with our Master? Was not his prayer 'Forgive as we forgive,' and was not 'Forgiveness' the jewel of jewels that fell from the Cross?

VII "Again I say, I speak not for the sick brother. If he is in truth penitent, he has already been forgiven in the Master's court, and here sit we, in judgment; we, the flock needing so much and

asking so much for ourselves, grudgingly hesitating about forgiving the sick brother of the Master."

VIII And when they had all declared forgiveness, songs of joy broke from all lips, and when the song was done, John said: "Forgive me that to-night I was afraid. I came here in fear. I was weary in mind and body, and almost a coward. There is no unkindness here. I see in your faces the reflected light of the Master's face, when he blessed the multitude.

IX "How beautifully strange this law of kindness, differing from all else. In money, the more you give the less you have. In kindness, the more you give the more you have. Surely, to-night we have found one of the deep things of God, and above our little church must be shining the Star of Bethlehem."

Chapter 9

OW, on another day, when John walked on the street, a woman, bearing in her arms a child, came out to him, and cried unto him for advice and help. And John said: "Is thy house clean and in order? Are thy children comfortably fed and clothed? Is all prepared for the homecoming of my brother, thy husband?" To all she answered: "Truly, yes." "Have you spoken kindly with all to-day?" And again she answered: "Yes, truly, I have so spoken, but I wish to do more. I wish to work more in the Master's business, to feed the hungry and comfort the needy."

II And John said: "Have you time, money, or strength to do more?" And the woman said: "Truly, I have neither, all is taken for my simple work here." And John answered: "Go in happiness and peace, little mother. The crown of woman is motherhood, and the chief jewel of the crown is service and kindness in the home.

III "Thy ambition for larger service commends thee, but there is no larger service. Have you heard the beautiful parable by our brother Van Dyke?

Three wise men travelled to Bethlehem. Another wise man, desiring to go with them, parted with all his worldly goods, for three beautiful and valuable gems, and started to find the Master. For years he travelled, in kindness to all, seeking the Master. He parted with one gem to purchase camels with which to cross the desert in search of the Master, with another to save the life of a child, and gave up his last gem to save the honor of a girl.

"He followed on, even unto Calvary, without ever seeing the light in the Master's face, or rendering service to him. He felt that his struggling life had been a failure, but on the great day, when the change came to him, the Master said to him: 'Inasmuch as ye have done to the least of these, ye have done it also unto me.' Go, little mother, and fear not. I would that all of the brothers of the Master were as ready as thou art to answer. IV

"He who fears death, dies every moment he contemplates it. The unafraid die but once." V

Chapter 10

N the next first day, John visited his own church for rest and worship. And the Shepherd of the flock preached and taught of the wrath of God and the sinfulness and depravity of man. And when he had finished with an exhortation that left the brethren in great fear, John arose, as was permitted by the new custom of his church, and spoke to them, saying: "I will lift up my voice in praise of mankind, for they are the children of the father and brothers of the Master. I must rebuke in kindness those who would commit them to a never ending misery and a hopeless and prayerless future. Surely I have watched their incomings and outgoings, and even their wrong doings. Even wickedness, crimes, and great unkindness have I seen, yet have I read the Master's word, 'Ye are my brothers.'

"I heard your words, my brother, of the beauty of the lily, the splendor of the trees, the grandeur of the everlasting hills, and the majesty of the mighty deep. But wherein is it written of any

of them, Ye are the children of the father and my brothers? The sea may dry up, the world be consumed, but who can destroy unselfish love?

III "Sing you of the glory of the trees or the stars? I have seen a man put away appetite and passion and hate and control himself. What tree ever surrendered a drop of moisture that another of its kind might live? Yet I have seen women and men who have gone hungry that others might be fed. Sing you of the majesty and power of the mighty deep? When was that power ever stayed or the mighty tide withheld in pity? Yet have I known many of our brothers, who, like our Master, have forgiven deep and grievous wrongs.

IV "When did the everlasting hills lie down for man and beast to walk over them? When did the rushing waters or the storm cloud withhold itself in consideration of right or wrong? Yet I say that I have found in the Master's work, poor and weak brothers, who have fought themselves day by day, and hour by hour, and in a fight more bitter than the hosts of an army in battle; they have subdued selfishness and conquered themselves, not through fear, but for love of another.

V "From my home last night I heard the noise and tumult of the city, the shout of the rabble, the deep tones of the whistling ship, clanging bell and the roar of the passing train. Yet I say to you, that in good time these jarring noises shall be changed, and even the great guns of war shall blend with all in a mighty anthem for the glory of the Everlasting Good and for the comfort of the sons of the Father.

VI "To-day let us be unafraid and sing again the song of the brotherhood. Who can measure the goodness in man, free from unselfishness? Who can put limits on the boundless kindness of the Father? Who dare say that His justice is not more kind than man's mercy? Can you count the sands of the ocean shore or the drops of water in the sea? If not, then let us not measure with stick or rule nor weigh on the scales of the markets of man the mighty plans of the Father.

VII "If we cannot weigh nor measure His goodness, who shall dare to limit the destiny of the brothers of the Master, the children of the Good, made in the image of Him who holds the world in the hollow of His hand?

"Praise of the brotherhood is praise of the Father. See what man has done. Naked and hungry, he has clothed and fed himself and his fellows. He has sailed the mighty waters and cunningly has he dived down and solved the mysteries of the deep. He has scaled the lofty mountains, and dug down into the bowels of the earth. He travels the continent with great swiftness, and speaks around the world to his brother in the twinkling of an eye. With fire he drives a giant from water and makes him his slave to move the ship and train, and turn the great wheels for the use of man. With cunning glass he has searched out the life of tiny atoms hid from his eye, and, turning his glass upward, he has brought the planets near to his observation and understanding. He flies like a bird in the sky and his understanding increases day by day. He has caught the unseen waves of sound, locks them in cunning caves, to be called forth whenever and as often as it pleases him. The elusive electric spark, the child of lightning, has he caught in clever trap, harnessed it to the wagons of usefulness and made it in light, heat, and power, an infant rival of the sun. VIII

"More and better than this, in the midst of tumult he has heard the still, small voice. He has heard the message of brotherhood taught by the Master, and has built church, school, and hospital for his brothers. In his infancy he neglected the insane, the blind, the weak and helpless; now, out of a common purse, he treats them 'even as a father treateth his child.' His brain, genius, and skill suggest, but this kindness proves that he is made in the image of the Father.

"The hour of brotherhood is upon us. Truly the kingdom of the Master is at hand. I have met most of you abroad in the Master's work. Surely we are gaining ground, with much yet to do. Go all to your homes, bring here of food and raiment that you can rightly spare. The night may be cold and stormy. Let us put a light in our window, warm and keep open this house, and some of us watch each night and day for opportunity to serve."

And each did as he was told, and from that day the spirit of kindness went forth from this temple, and it was called the Church of the Brotherhood, and dedicated to the use of man.

Chapter 11

N the afternoon of the first day, John and his brother, Matthew, spoke to many of the merchants and men of business on the plan of co-operation and brotherhood. And Matthew bore testimony to the great happiness that had befallen him in his sharing with his partners and his brothers. He declared unto them that he had provided for the care and education of the children no longer employed, and he had filled their places with men and women, whose minds and bodies better fitted them for labor. He told of the success and happiness each partner had in being diligent in his business, of several of his partners who had been cured of intemperance and many cured of indolence, how each one had learned faithfulness, and that all were cheerful and unafraid. And many others gave evidence of the same truth.

I And then there arose one named George, who said: "Why not put away this hypocrisy and declare yourselves socialists that you are? There is enough for all and if we are brothers, why not

divide? Why not divide now? Come, John, you are my brother, you teach brotherhood. Therefore, you are a socialist. Answer! why not divide now?" And John answered: "My brother, I have been given many names besides John. Some have called me a philosopher, others have called me a fool.

"It may be that I am a socialist. If so, I hope III
a kind and patient one. I fear my brother George is possessed of the spirit of impatience, which breeds delay.

"There is the great building across the street; IV
which one of you, my brothers, desiring to reach the roof, would stand in the street and jump? After many days of jumping you would still be on the street. But if you were wise, you would enter in the door and, finding the stairway, would climb little by little and in patience at last reach the place you sought.

"In the plan of the Great Good, primitive man V
earned his bread in the sweat of his face. As our brothers have advanced in science, the labor has been lessened; as we improve in kindness, we

learn better how to use our leisure. Many of us are safer at the bench than on the street, for we have not all learned the difference between leisure and idleness.

VI "It is the plan of the Good that we climb step by step, and my brother George's jumping may not help or hinder the climbing. Who dare question the wisdom of the plan of individual effort and self-preservation?

VII "Work or starve, labor or go naked, seems harsh to some, but under that plan the great strides of manhood have been made. Under this stress of nature the great pictures have been painted, the great songs have been sung, and some of the best books written. As we grow in the spirit of brotherhood, more is being done in the deeper thought of service. When all are in the spirit of brotherhood, the demand for our labor will be less; we will have much leisure but no idleness. If we seek to serve others, forgetting all selfishness, we will have reached the very top of the high destiny of man. There will be no clamoring for division, for all mankind will be as one man, and he the brother of the Master."

" Why plead for property and wealth? Our time VIII
is short, canst thou take it with thee? Hast thou seen pockets in a shroud? Do you wish to burden your children when you are gone, to make them targets for the cunning and the wicked? Would you relieve them of all work and enmesh their feet in the net of idleness?

" Truly I say to you, the two weakest and most IX
foolish ones I know are my brothers Henry and Thomas. Henry has in his struggle for money sacrificed his friends and his home. He seems never to see the beauty of the fields nor the glory of the stars, while my unhappy brother Thomas in hate and envy points to my brother Henry, and wants to share his narrow, unhappy life. Come, my brother George, be patient, be kind. Let us not envy those who have more than we, but pity those who have less, and in this way we shall hasten the coming of the Brotherhood."

Chapter 12

N the next night, in the Church of the Brotherhood, there was much of the Master's business to do. The women were sorting, cleaning, and repairing garments for the poor. Brother Ralph, a mender of shoes, had one of his benches not far from the altar and was working where he might hear the glad stories of the Brotherhood. The light in the window shone out upon a stormy night, but there were food and warm drinks, light, warmth, music, cheerfulness and prayer within. Many told how they made old garments as good as new, and how those they had helped had gone away in happiness. One unknown brother arose and thanked them for their open house and hospitality, saying: "I came with my wife. I usually go to the saloon. I have enjoyed the refreshments, the music and words of cheer. I shall come often. I shall be happy if I may help in this work. I hope to prove worthy." And when he sat down, John said: "This is good, my brother. Remember that in the Master's court a man is as good as

he tries to be. The saying that 'Hell is paved with good intentions' is not true, for every good intention is a step in the ladder that at last leads out of selfishness into the Brotherhood."

Then Ralph, the shoemaker, arose, clothed in the garments of labor, saying: "I wish to make a new contract with the Brotherhood. I demanded and you have kindly paid me more than I need, and my wages must be reduced. To-day I have furnished good shoes for five poor persons, and from every one I received something better than money. The last was a poor, lame boy, sick and sad. He came in. His feet were wet and cold. Mary fitted him with dry and warm stockings, and I found the shoes that just suited his little feet. I told him that the shoes were his. II

"For a long time he looked at me, then at the organ, the altar, the pews and the windows, and coming near me, he asked gently: 'Art thou the Jesus?' I put down my work, lifted him to my lap, and when I found words said: 'No, I am his poorest servant; I work for him here. We call him the Master. He has called us brothers. You are his little brother. You are worthy the III

name. I hope to be some time.' Now, bring me some more of the Master's business. I have the will and strength of ten men such as I was yesterday. I was envious and even jealous, I fear, of our preacher, and of John, who were doing so much, but now I feel that my work bench is as sacred as the altar, and my calling as much the Master's business as theirs. All the money I have earned in my life is not of so great a value as the pay I received to-day from the crippled boy."

IV When he finished, the preacher arose and said: "Truly 't is John and I who should be envious of you. Your bench has become the altar in our church to-night, and no sweeter sermon has been preached from any desk, since the Master said: 'Forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.'" Then after song and benediction, they went their way, leaving a few to stay until late in the night, lest, perchance, might be lost an opportunity to serve. The light in the window of the Church of the Brotherhood was kept always burning and the door was never locked.

Chapter 13

FTER service on the next first day, John arose and said: "I bring you tidings of great joy. One of the brothers, named Edward, has given us of his money so that we may now build an addition to our church. This will give us more room for the brothers in distress. We can now carry out at once our plan to build, so that we can provide for the temporary care of the sick and distressed."

II And one of the brothers arose to object, saying: "That money of Edward's was not honestly earned. His wealth was wrung from the poor, and I would not have the Church of the Brotherhood accept from him." And there followed much discussion upon that subject.

II When John arose, he said: "Oh, my brothers, are ye not trying to measure time, space, and eternity by your pocket rule. I know our brother Edward has grown rich, but all according to our law. Not one single shingle for our church would you force from him. He has in the imitation of others taken every opportunity to gather his

money. He has, doubtless, in that struggle lost much of the true values of life; he now enjoys the giving and even has learned to share with others. This which we call money is an instrument which we may use in the Master's service.

IV "The saying, 'money talks and money thinks' is childish. The men that control it may be sick with unkindness. A man may be, but money cannot be tainted. Who among you would go hungry, because the bread before you was made by a wicked or an unkind baker, or because, perchance, the farmer who sowed the wheat was unkind, even to the stealing of the seed? Or who among you, being athirst, would refuse to drink from the well which had been dug by underpaid and overworked labor? Come, my brothers, let us put away small and childish things. Even if the money had a soul, and had been engaged in unkindness, and could change its mind and its business, then let us say, 'It is born again,' and welcome its help in the Master's service.

V "Out there in the houses of sickness and unkindness our brothers are waiting for our coming. Other noble brothers in other churches and out

of the churches are helping. The harvest is ripe. The kingdom is at hand, and who dare stop now in the midst of our harvest and say, 'Who hath made the scythe?' or 'Who hath sowed the seed?' or 'Of what blood or nation or faith is the brother who reaps and gathers at our side?' Of a truth I say to you, that whoso worketh with us, and even those who work against us, are our brothers, and brothers of the Prince of Kindness."

VI And all the brothers being of one accord, John said: "I now ask that we send our brotherly thanks to Edward and pray him to share with us that which he hath given." And one of the brothers said: "John, your speech is strange. If he gives, does he not share?" And John said: "No, many give who do not share. Many give for selfish show; others to be relieved of importunity; others give unwisely and to the detriment of those whom they would serve. Have you not heard of Sir Launfal, the rich and powerful, who went in a vision to find the cup from which the Master drank? As he left his castle, in search of the Master's cup, he was met at his very gate by a leper begging. In sorrow and disgust, he

gave the leper gold, but did not share it with him. Returning, after years of weary search, weak and suffering, he found the leper, still poor and starving at his gate. He had only a crust of bread, which he not only gave to the leper, but shared it with him. He broke the ice and gave him to drink. In his giving, he fed the hungry body of the leper; in his kindness of sharing, he fed the hungry soul of the leper. Then a beautiful light fell about the place. He heard the words, 'It is I; be not afraid.' In years of giving, he found not even the Master's cup, yet in one moment of sharing, he found the Master Himself.

"So I say, we will invite our brother to come. VII
He has blessed us and himself by giving. He must have the greater blessing of sharing. He must hear and see Mary and also Ralph, the Master's cobbler, and they must tell him how in giving and sharing with the lame boy one poor pair of shoes and stockings they heard the Master's voice and saw his face."

Chapter 14

ND on the evening of the next first day, one David came to the Church of the Brotherhood to teach and preach in the cause of temperance. With great truth and force he portrayed the evil of strong drink, and offered many remedies for it. Much enthusiasm was aroused and, according to custom, many spoke, some offering one and some another remedy. Some men advised the forceful annihilation of the traffic.

II During all this John sat silent until called upon, and then said: "I have thought of this for years. I fear that I am not yet able to speak in kindness, and you know our rule, 'He who bears unkind thoughts shall be silent.' When I think of the traffic as a business, I must be silent, but when I think of the men who are in the business, I must say, they are our brothers; more than that, we are partners in their business.

III "Must we hate our partner for carrying on our partnership affairs? Are they the whole cause of our intemperance? Do we hate the farmer or

the baker for our gluttony? or the jeweler or dressmaker for our vanity? Shall we blame the maker of our cot and pillow for our indolence, or accuse the merchant for making us spendthrifts or profligates?

"You say we must get rid of the wineshop. If so, we must go out of partnership in the business and go in honor. We tax them for making it, and with the money build our ships and pay our soldiers for our country's defence. After taxing all their property, we charge them a special license to sell their goods to our other brothers, and with this money pay for the police and fire protection of all our homes, and build streets and sidewalks in front of our churches. IV

"Come, let us not be too virtuous while our cloak is marked with the scarlet letter. Let us not be intemperate with temperance. V

"Our good brother to-night says we must condemn this business. Surely we do, but in what manner? Shall we burn and destroy and right wrong with wrong? There is a lawful way to condemn. Are the money worshippers ready to try that? If we wish my brother's lot on which VI

to build a school, it is for public good, and we take it whether he will or not, but we pay him for that which he has lawfully earned.

VII "Within a block of our church is my brother's wineshop. I visit him often and know him well. He receives me with kindness, even though I speak for the cause of temperance within his door. He is a lawful citizen; his family is to him what yours is to you. He is our partner. If paupers and criminals are made there, we must share with him in that, as we also share with him the profits of his business. Partners must share losses as well as gains.

VIII "May we not, as a nation, say to him, 'We believe it for the good of all to stop our business. We will lose our share and pay for yours.' Think you not it would be a great day in the Master's business?

IX "Meantime, there are many other things that we can do. We can obey the Master's message to look not upon the wine, and heed the warning and warn others that at last it stingeth like an adder. We may not fill all the pits, but we may watch thereby and warn those who pass. We

may, if we 'render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's,' induce our country to part with its interests in the pits, and in honor, justice, and kindness, close them up forever.

" Pardon my much speaking. I have much in my heart I cannot find words to say. I visit the jail every week. I know how most of them find the road there. I saw last week the poor, sick boys in a reform school, and saw the prenatal marks of weakness there. I have been in our poorhouse, and know the sad stories there. I have seen hungry, innocent children. I have seen the sister's blush of shame, and the mother's tears; I have seen our best and noblest fall. I have watched by the bedside of friends and brothers, chased by furies of hell itself. X

" And then have I prayed for patience and wisdom, and that which seemed wisdom yesterday, seemed childish and weak to-day. If I could be blessed with wisdom to solve this great question, and so bless the sons of man, I would willingly give my poor life, with only one regret, and that is that I have so little to give in this branch of the Master's business. XI

XII "We must go on; the harder the task the more of kindness is needed, and if we fail for a time, the Master's hand will smooth the rough edges of our unfinished work."

Chapter 15

OW the work of the Church of the Brotherhood became known, and many others followed its simple plan of doing the Master's work. It was spoken of so often as the Church of the Brotherhood that the leaders of the great sect to which it belonged feared it might tend to the establishment of a new sect or faith and take from the honor and glory of the old. And the Church of the Brotherhood being called upon to answer at a general meeting of the whole sect, they chose John to make explanation.

II On the day appointed, John appeared before the counsel of the church. There were gathered together a great multitude of men of learning, piety, and wisdom. And when John came into the great temple chosen for the meeting, he carried in his hand a box filled with hammer, saw, and other implements of his trade. He approached the altar, where the chosen one presided and, uncovering his head, set down his box

and said: "I am here by your request and to answer all questions touching the Church of the Brotherhood."

And the presiding one said: "Think you, John, you show proper respect by bringing your trade into the house of God?" And John said: "I was using them before I came and will use them again shortly on my leaving, and I know that no greater respect can I show than by being ready for the Master's call to work. Know ye that the end is near? I have but little to show when the Master calls, and I would be happy should He call, now that He sees my working tools. He would see that though worn in service, they are bright and well sharpened for my next duty. III

"I have never preached a great sermon, painted a picture, or won a great battle. I talked last week with a young man working with me and told him the story of the Master. He laughed at me, saying: ''T is an old tale to me.' I showed him how faithfully I kept my hours' work and how well I could make and hang a door. To-day he is here with me, a seeker for all the truth about the Master. IV

V "Pardon me, but I believe a perfect dovetail is a psalm, a well-made chest of drawers is a sermon, a set of good shop tools and a clean bench and shop is a certificate of character, and a well-driven nail is an answer to prayer. Since my only preaching is with this box of tools, I pray, if it be not offensive, let me keep it by. I shall feel more at home in answering your questions and feel more at ease should the Master come."

VI And the secretary of this great convention made plain the complaints against those who formed the Church of the Brotherhood, and in response to requests by him who presided, John made answer, and said: "It is said that we have diverted the property of our church by changing its name and form of service. That it is losing the title of our sect, and taking from us our glory and great name. We have not diverted the property, but as we see the light, and as we read the message, we have stimulated the Master's work beneath the roof. We have not changed its name. The old name of our sect is as dear to us as ever, for within that sect we first learned the story of the Master. We call it sometimes, as a term of endearment, The

Brotherhood, and we find other churches doing the same.

"We hope soon every church may, without changing its name or service, be called The Brotherhood. You speak of the glory and credit of the churches of our sect. Was it for that our church was built? I helped as a young man to lay its cornerstone, and to nail the shingles on the spire. Yet never did I hear in song or sermon that it was built for the glory of our sect. If so it can be found in our creed, let us take it out, for it cannot be found in the message of the Master. VII

"We are charged with neglect in teaching the creed. I can speak only for myself, and in that I am guilty. It is months since I read our creed and I fear many of us are equally guilty. Every day I find a new truth in the Sermon on the Mount. I am a carpenter and house builder, and in my daily work I pay but little attention to the words of my fellow servants, until I get full understanding of the wishes of the Master-Builder. Then why should we quarrel or even argue with our brothers as to plans, specifications, and mys- VIII

teries of life and death until we have finished the simple duties laid before us. If one of my brothers finds comfort and help in his creed, let him have it. I would not take it from him. I confess I have not had time; forgive me if I seem unkind, I have not had time to read the message of man with the message of the Master lying open before me.

IX "You say that we endanger our church property by leaving it unlocked and exposed. Fear not. There is little to tempt. If any unhappy man should steal food or rest he would be welcome to it. When he knew this he would repent. He might take our Bible unkindly; if so, he might thereby, while seeking a stone, find the bread of life. I beg you, think not so much of material. All that we call property is soon to be changed.

X "We have heard the story of the so-called Holy Crusades, where thousands of lives and years of time were sacrificed to secure the material cross on which the Master died. We would all be nearer ready for the great change if that time and those lives had been spent in teaching the Eleventh Commandment.

"We are charged with making our church a business house. True. We have made it a house for the Master's business. The brothers, wives, and daughters clean, mend, and sew there, whatever time they can give from their homes. We have a shoemaker whom we call the Master's cobbler. We keep food as well as clothing, and to every one in trouble whom we serve we preach a sermon that he can understand. XI

"What think you of the man who would print over his door, 'All souls are welcome here,' and then only unlock the door a few hours on one day in the week? What think you of the seller of goods who locked his shop six days in the week and then, when opened, made it sombre and uninviting? We are distributing the Master's wares. We give without money and without price, yet we have strong competition in the shops of unkindness, sickness, and unhappiness all about us. We are determined to make ours the brightest and best in the neighborhood, and are gaining every day. XII

"When we clothe ourselves we think in kindness, and in that way pray for those unclad. XIII

When we eat we pity the hungry, and in this we pray for them. When we are happy we think of those in trouble, and so we pray for them, and when we work in the brotherhood by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and comforting the distressed we are helping to answer the prayers of our own making.

XIV "What say you of the man who calls upon the everlasting God for a full granary, while he refuses to sow or reap? Many of us make long prayers for the poor; perchance it would be well to shorten the prayers and lengthen our service." As he took in his hand his cap and box, John said: "The time to go has come. I will return when you desire and make full answer to the questions yet unanswered. I cannot delay now. I am under promise to do a few hours' work for a brother who is sick, alas! with intemperance, indolence, and many forms of unkindness. He calleth me a psalm singer and a fool, but if I keep my promise with him, and give him good service at a just and reasonable price, I shall commend myself to him, and thereby I hope to commend my Master's wares.

"If he believe in me and in my business, he will at least hear the story, and if I fail, I shall know that the fault is mine and not the Master's, and nothing can take from me the blessing of having tried." XV

Chapter 16

ND when John came to the house of the man sick with unkindness he set about his work with diligence, and when it was done he rendered his charge. The sick man said: "How now, my psalm singer? I have always known you for a fool, and now you render your charge less than I agreed to pay, and less than its customary worth. What hope of gain is hidden in your foolish heart? I shall pay that which you ask, but come not for more, nor hope to gain by this lack of wisdom. Your work is excellent, but a fool you are. I say, get what you can and keep what you get. I provide for myself; let the world do the same."

II And John said: "Can and do you provide for yourself? Did you sow or reap the wheat which made bread for you to-day? Can you weave the garment for your body? Can you even make the covering for your head, or the shoes for your feet? Can you even perform the simple labor I have put upon your house to-day? Surely some one is kind to you, since you have all these

blessings, outside of your own possibilities. I still believe you to be worthy. One bitter cold day last winter, when our Brother Samuel left his horse shivering with cold in front of a wine-shop, I saw you stop in the storm and take from his wagon a blanket and place it over the suffering horse. I had misjudged you; your act was a sermon to me and a service in my Master's cause. I ask one more favor of you. To-night you will see in my brother's wineshop Lewis, the son of a widow. To-day he receives his wage and will probably spend it there. Lewis is a good son but for this sickness, and in this weakness forgets his mother, who loves him. Lewis has great respect for you, and if you will you can send him home sober with his earnings for his mother. I know that no man who will blanket a horse in a storm will refuse this help to the widow and the widow's son."

III And then the unkind man swore an oath that Lewis should go home to his mother with his wage and in his right mind. He kept his oath. And thus John the Unafraid began the cure of a sick brother, and set one more laborer at work in the Master's business.

Chapter 17

OW on the day fixed John appeared again before the great gathering of his sect to make further answer to the questions concerning the Brotherhood. He was received with smiles and kindness, and said:

II "I read in your faces that kindness which will hear with patience, and judge in charity, that which I came to say.

III "We are charged with making in our new building a place for games and sports for the young. This is true. The children must be kept from the streets. In the playhouses that we are building they shall have every game of childhood. They shall have physical training; they shall be taught to play fairly and honestly. We will not force them into our church, but around every part of our house, old and new, it will be cheerful and inviting. We never talk of fear, except to prevent the teaching thereof.

IV "We are complained of because we have among our number many who believe in communication with the spirits of those who have gone before.

"I believe that we have such among us. Well, V
have we not been teaching our faith and hope
of life everlasting? Shall we hate those who seek
to prove our faith well founded? If sailing in a
storm we prayed for land, and some brother
should mount the mast and shout to us below,
'Be of good cheer, the harbor is before us,'
would we hate him for his message? Mine eyes
have not yet seen; shall I say that none have?

"Sometimes, when the storm is on, and the VI
people are shaken with fear, we seem to hear the
Captain cry, 'All is well,' and we hasten with
the message, which is for all. If we withhold
the message from a single soul, we have not done
well in the Master's business.

"We are charged with having infidels in our VII
church. We have some who say that they are
infidels. Some have said that they believe not
in our Master but are willing to help clothe and
feed and comfort the needy. Here are two of
our brothers. One says, 'Lord, I believe,' and
meantime neglects his family and oppresses his
neighbor. The other says, 'I believe not,' but
deals kindly with all, and helps the Master's
poor. Which one of these say you is the be-

liever? He who believes with his tongue, or the other who believes with his heart, his hand, and his property?

VIII "It is said that we have with us those who teach healing the body by faith. Is it possible that we can dislike those who have a greater faith in the Master than we have?

IX "I say to you that every soul is a servant of the Master, is the Master's brother and is a believer in the Master, whatever his tongue says, whether he worships at the shrine of Confucius, in the temple of Buddha, or before any other, or at no shrine at all, if he does one unselfish service to the Master's brother, even the least of them.

X "A few days since one of our brothers, on his first visit, said that he was an unbeliever and wished to discuss with us the Trinity and the Immaculate Conception. I made him busy comforting an old man, getting his shoes mended, and fitting him with a warmer coat. The next time he came he invited me to talk with him about what he called the childishness of Predestination and Foreordination. I kindly put

him on a committee to go with a brother to visit a family in great distress. A few days later he reported to us. He had found a doctor who would serve. He found employment for a son out of employment. His wife and daughter had visited and tended the sick mother.

"When he spoke to us I saw the light of the Master shining in his face. He is one of our infidels; what would you have us do with him? We cannot spare him. He has quit talking theology and is doing religion. He may be an infidel, but he is the Master's infidel. XI

"And now," said John, "the charge against us is that we put over the door of our church and above our altar, 'Dedicated to the use of Man.' XII

"It is said that it should be dedicated to the Glory of God. It is our thought that service to man is the true worship of the Father and service of the Master. We cannot serve the Father by neglecting His children. What say you of the man who would say to you, 'I am thy friend; I honor you and love you,' and on the same day, finding your son in the pit, crossed over to the other side and left your child to perish? Would XIII

not his love be better proved by bringing home your child? What say you of us all who constantly cry in lip service, 'Lord, save me! Lord, save me! We honor and glorify thy name,' while at the same time we neglect his hungry children, who are suffering all about us? We would serve the Master; we cannot anoint his head nor give him a cup of water, but we have his message as to the least of his brothers.

XIV "Last night one of our brothers stayed out nearly all night to bring a sick brother home. And he told me to-day, at his labor, that he was weary of body but that he had last night crossed the desert and had seen the manger where the Master was born.

XV "But yesterday I visited with a brother and helped to bury his wife, the soul of his soul. With tearless eyes, and crazed with grief, he cursed and cried, 'There is no God.'

XVI "Long I talked with him, but he would not hear me; patiently I waited, and at last I spoke of the children left to his care and the message of the Master to the little ones. Then tears came to his eyes, and I knew that he was sane and

comforted. When I came out of his door I felt that the Master was saying to me, 'Ye have been with me in the Garden of Gethsemane.'

"I know a brother whose toil is hard by day, and whose sorrow is keen and bitter at night. Deserted by those whom he has loved and protected, no word of complaint falls from his lips, but kindly he bears testimony to his many blessings. Poor in purse, sick and weak in body, he goes singing about the Master's work. When I meet him in the business I feel unworthy to touch his hand, or even the hem of his garment, for with all his own burdens he makes lighter the load of many a brother. He serves the Master by service to man, and on the great day I think that the Master will say to him, 'Come here, my brother, you, too, have been a bearer of the cross.'" XVII

Chapter 18

N the next day, at noon, John was eating his midday meal with his fellow workmen, who were sitting about him. And there were those among them who sought to lead John into discussion. One of his fellows said to him: "How is it, John, that I see no meat in thy food?" And John said: "In this, as in everything else, if we are honest, our own judgment should govern. I believe it best for my body to abstain from meat, and since thy eating meat offends me not I trust that my not eating meat may not offend you."

And one of them said: "I hear that you have been preaching equal rights for the negro." "'T is great praise from them to call my talking preaching," said John. "I do so talk for I so believe. That is the true law of kindness, and neither man nor nation is fully free until all are equal before the law.

"I remember a part of the message, 'Come unto me all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Would you, my brother,

read it, 'Come unto me all ye of white skin who are heavy laden and weary?' If so, beware, my brother, lest the sun and the wind so change your skin as to deprive you of your natural rights and destroy your soul."

IV And a young man named Ebenezer said to him: "I heard but yesterday that you believed that women should have a voice in the government of church and State. Surely you do not preach this foolish doctrine." And John said: "I preach not at all, except with this box of tools; but since you ask I must say I do so believe and so talk. I believe in kindness, and to give all an equal chance in self-government is justice, and justice is but a small part of kindness. Let us see, my brother.

V "I have known your mother and your sister Kate since you were born. I have great honor for your home. What say you, would it be kind to say to your mother and sister, 'Be silent, while I declare to you the needs of this house? I, the man, must determine what we shall eat and drink and how we shall be clothed.' Your

sister Kate led you in school, and I warrant to-day knows as well or better than you the duties of citizenship.

VI "I have eaten her bread, and have seen your work in your shop, and in truth and kindness I say she is the better mechanic of the two.

VII "Tell me why she should not have a hand in her own government. Is it because of her clothes? Then look to it that some day you be not deprived of your natural rights because some one throws a shawl across your broad shoulders.

VIII "Is it because of her lack of property? She has an equal share in your father's estate.

IX "Is it because of her work? She works more hours than you.

X "Is it because her physical strength is less than yours? Then beware that a fever does not take away your citizenship. I know a brother, who is a prize-fighter, but very little learned in the laws of government; if citizenship is to be based on physical strength, he would cast three votes to your one.

"Truly I say to you, mankind has left the Dark Ages, when government was decided by the largest club or stone in the hands of the strongest savage. The growth is slow but sure. The time will come when the poorest and weakest of all mankind will be equal before the laws of man, as they are now equal before the courts of the Most High." XI

And Ebenezer said: "I understand not how so good a carpenter can be so great a fool." XII

And John said: "The two greatest duties are to work and to think, and the two greatest blessings are to be able to do both. Come, my brother, despair not as to yourself, nor even as to me. I know that you can do honest work, and if you faithfully continue at work, some day, perhaps, you may be able to think. And if so be that blessing shall come to you, you will thereafter call no man a fool who gives expression to honest thought." XIII

And during the afternoon John called the Master builder unto him where, in the dining-room of the new house, he was to place a set of drawers. And John said to the Master builder: "The XIV

lumber furnished for these drawers is not seasoned according to contract, and I cannot afford to endanger your good name and mine by using it."

XV The Master builder said: "Who pays for your labor?" And John said: "Truly you pay me out of the money of the owner. But I am paid for honest work only. Give me seasoned lumber and I will make, and fit, these drawers to be a daily blessing in this house. This green lumber will warp and pinch and be a curse to the house, and a shame upon both of us." And the Master builder said: "Use that which is furnished. I will take the responsibility." And John said: "I cannot hide myself behind so small a cloak of hyprocrisy."

XVI And John reasoned with the Master builder, in kindness, saying: "The meanest thing we can say about honesty is that it is the best policy; yet even that ought to suffice. Let us selfishly look to your own interests. Every workman knows of this cheating and will not hesitate to deprive you of the full measure of his service. It is in human nature to cheat a cheater, and

you lose more than you gain. More than this, your reputation will soon be gone and with it your business.

"I appeal to you on a higher plane. By fraud and deceit you shrink your own soul and violate the great Eleventh Commandment to deal as kindly with others as you wish to be dealt with yourself." And the Master builder said: "I give much of my profits in our church to the poor." And John said: "It will be better to give less or nothing to the poor. Indeed, it were better to receive in charity yourself than to dwarf your soul by cheating. The building of a common box according to agreement is more beautiful in the Master's eyes than the building of a Temple of Worship with profits you have not honestly acquired. Come, my brother, let us change your name from the Master builder to the Master's builder." XVII

And the Master builder did as John desired, and many days after told John that in that building he had made small monies but great values. XVIII

Chapter 19

FTER many days of active industry the Brotherhood completed the building next their church. There was much rejoicing among the members of the Brotherhood that they had so pleasant and convenient a home into which to receive the afflicted and continue the Master's work. And on the day of the dedication of this new home for the Brotherhood many came to see and to hear the services, and many were disappointed that the service consisted so much of relieving the suffering, the sick, and the disabled, and so little of time given to worship.

II In the evening of the day that this building was dedicated to the use of man a statesman of learning attended the meeting. He spoke of the glory of his country, saying that he had just been selected by the people as one of the lawmakers of the nation, and asked for suggestions as to the needs of the people. And the members of the Brotherhood spoke freely, each giving his own opinion as to the needs of the hour. Some

pleaded strongly for national prohibition; others reasoned in favor of stopping immigration.

John, having been called upon, arose and said: III
"I am wholly unlearned in that which you call statecraft, and yet I believe it to be as much a part of the Master's business as the building of a church or the spreading of the gospel. So long as any of our brothers remain sick with selfishness the lawmaker must protect the weak against them. We cannot forget the Master's injunction to 'render unto Caesar the things that are Cæsar's.'

"That means to us now not the mere paying of IV
our tribute in money, for that cannot discharge this duty unless we exercise our franchise intelligently and unselfishly; and if our brother, who is to assist in the making of national laws, will consent to hear a suggestion I offer it with a spirit of humility and kindness.

"First of all in this government, which has been V
so greatly blessed by progress in material things, our laws should rest uniformly upon all; not only that justice may be done, but that each citizen may have respect for the laws of this country.

I find on reading some of the statutes of our honored country that crimes and misdemeanors, which only the rich and powerful can commit, are punishable with fines, and that the law is satisfied with the payment of money, whereas smaller offences, which do less damage to the community, are punishable by imprisonment. This lack of uniformity is unjust and tends to create in the minds of the masses of our brothers a disrespect for the law. This is not the only case of lack of uniformity, as my brother will find upon examination.

VI "My brother Mark has spoken strongly against immigration. I fear that we have forgotten how many of us are immigrants, and I venture to suggest that the danger to our dear country is not so much in opening our gates to the oppressed of the world as it is in giving some of them so readily a voice in the government of the people. The franchise, more than the immigration laws, needs the attention of unselfish men.

VII "In my poor, limited reading of the history of our country I find that the most disastrous results have fallen to our lot when wrong is har-

nessed to financial interests. Slavery, the greatest curse our government has known, was abolished at enormous cost, as remnants of that dreadful mistake remain to remind us. Yet I verily believe that it might all have been remedied with but little sacrifice, if that institution had not been so closely enmeshed with the commercial interests of our government, which is always powerful. The misdemeanors of the poor, caused by their sickness, are easily corrected, for they have but little strength in the making and execution of the laws.

" Polygamy, the great crime against our homes, VIII
has grown more powerful. We send men to prison for bringing one woman into our country for immoral purposes. Yet is it not true that the teachers of polygamy bring thousands into our country in a year and seek to cover with the cloak of religion this violation of law?

" This cloak could be easily torn aside but for IX
the gold buttons that hold it intact.

" Those who teach the open violation of this law X
become lawmakers, and this has a tendency to give to the thinking citizen disrespect for the law and its makers.

XI "My brother Edward has spoken eloquently of the extension of our territory, and has made many suggestions as to the government of those people in distant lands.

XII "Without questioning his sincerity I must say in kindness that the teachings of the Master will not find an abiding place when presented by force, and from my limited reading of history and from the wise sayings of our great brother Abraham I believe that no nation is good enough to govern another nation without that nation's consent.

XIII "I think that I know the lofty spirit which animated many of our good brothers who favored the governing of other peoples by force, and I am reminded of my own feelings when I first became a member of this church.

XIV "I wished every one to be happy, but I insisted that they should be happy in my way, and the wisdom of that day seems childish to me now, since I found many of the brothers just as happy, and perhaps more useful, in ways which are not entirely mine.

"I find that this same spirit of misguided kindness has animated many of the nations in the past to make some poor, unhappy, and weak nation happy, but in their own way. XV

"I am told by those who are students of the history of nations, which is confirmed by my own limited study, that the great statesman Daniel uttered a profound truth when he said, 'No nation could be happy except under laws of its own making,' and I suggest modestly and in kindness to our good brother, who is to make laws for our government, whether it would not be better to seek the happiness of those who are governed rather than the extension of our own territory. XVI

"The flag that we love stands for liberty and progress over our people, but it does not stand for these over an alien people, who never asked for it and who do not want it. XVII

"May I be pardoned for my suggestion to him who makes the laws, that if the appeal for righteousness has not been heard among his brethren in office it might be well for him to call their attention to the fact that righteousness is a law as fixed and immutable as the law of gravita- XVIII

tion; that a house divided against itself cannot stand; that no nation can endure half slave and half free, and no republic lives that is part monarchy and part republic, and in the graveyard of nations we read the operation of this law without exception.

X "However, the great question which must occupy the minds of unselfish men is the constant mistake of the meaning of co-operation and competition.

X "Co-operation sometimes puts in power selfish men, who use that power to the detriment of the many. Competition is the parent of the 'sweat shop' and the foster parent of child labor.

XI "Yet I have faith to believe that soon there will be unselfishness enough in the strong among the people to bring about a condition of co-operation without destroying the individual activity.

XII "It is my thought that the highest state of manhood will be found when we consider all men part of one great man.

XIII "We shall be as careful of every part of that great manhood as we are now of each part of our physical body; and when that time comes we

shall no more think of oppressing one class of our brothers than of consenting to a war between our right hand and our left, wherein both might be crippled or destroyed.

"When that time comes we shall no longer XXIV dwarf the minds and bodies of our children by long and confining hours of labor. We are too wise to work our beasts of burden when young, lest we lose thereby the full measure of their value in labor.

"In our lack of wisdom we selfishly and negli- XXV gently allow the overworking of children, thereby crippling the hands and feet of those who are to bear the burdens of mankind, and we put out the eyes of those who must stand on the watchtower of the future to warn us of our danger. The greatest harvest of man is mankind.

"The greatest problem which should attract the XXV attention of unselfish members of state is the devising of more and surer ways to avoid wars between the nations of the world.

"We settle differences between man and man in XXVI our courts, and, however much we may be dis-

satisfied with the judgment, we bow with respect to the decisions of the law made by those empowered to enforce it.

XVIII "When the idea of brotherhood has taken possession of all the nations of the world, there is no reason why all national and international differences may not be settled in courts of our own choosing, and each nation bow with respect and reverence to the determination of these courts.

XIX "Words cannot tell the horrors of war. No book has yet been written that can even suggest the train of curses that follow war. We must learn that war never settles any question unless right is victorious. We must learn that the glory of our country is not in our strength, nor wealth, nor in the extent of our territory, but in the justice of our laws, and in the virtue of our people.

XX "We believe our form of government to be the best that the wisdom of man has yet devised, but we can never give that form of government to another people by force of arms. We can commend this form of government to other nations by showing them that there are no slaves under our flag and that all are equal before the law."

Chapter 20

ND there came an editor of a great newspaper to see John, saying: "I print many thousands of newspapers daily and help to form public opinion. I have come to talk with you about my business and yours."

II And John said: "The Master's business includes both."

III And the editor said: "I believe you, and as I am now printing the beliefs of leading divines I would like to have you write and I will print an article on the plan of salvation."

IV And John said: "I write but little; my hands are those of a carpenter, as you see, and are unused to writing. However, if you wish, you may print my poor opinion.

V "The whole plan of salvation may be found in the word kindness.

VI "Unselfishness is the cornerstone of true character and the rock of our salvation.

VII "Fear is our greatest curse, and opportunity to serve our greatest blessing.

"Unselfish service destroys fear, and he who is unafraid has found salvation." VIII

The editor said: "John, do you read my paper; and, if so, wherein can I better it?" IX

And John said: "I am a carpenter, and though I read your paper, I am not qualified to criticise. Let me ask what you consider to be your calling?" X

And the editor said: "I am a merchant — a seller of news and a writer of editorials." XI

And John said: "I notice many inaccuracies as to events," to which the editor replied: "Yes, this is necessarily so, for we send out the apprentices in our profession to gather the news." XII

And John said: "This would not do in the carpenter trade. We put our apprentice on the least important work, where mistakes are not damaging. Has it ever occurred to you that it would be kinder to your customer to have your best and most experienced men gather the news you sell and let the apprentice write the editorials? An editorial full of sophistries, or of even absurd logic, could hurt no one but yourself, whereas XIII

an untruth repeated by every paper you print might be of great harm to some innocent person and of no public good.

XIV "What say you, are any of your news items or editorials written in the business office? Do you ever punish one brother to pay a social obligation to another? Are your policies fixed for public good? And having fixed your editorial policy, do you instruct your young apprentices to find only the news that dovetails with that policy?"

XV And the editor answered: "You know that I publish a partisan paper. I love my country and believe that my party offers the best for my country. We, as all do, color the news to assist in a good cause."

XVI And John said: "Colored news is false news, and no worthy cause is ever helped by a falsehood.

XVII "'T is a failing cause that needs to be upheld by the crutches of untruth. My brother, I have watched your great enterprise for years. I honor and respect you, but I say in kindness, give to the people who look up to you what they need, and not so much of what they want. What say

you of the doctor who withholds that which is beneficial and to please you prescribes that which your fancy craves?

"Your splendid editorial last week opposing XVII
prize-fighting was not well emphasized by the full-page report of the brutal contest that occurred the day before. Your report of the unfortunate conduct of a young brother in our neighborhood last month was no doubt truly reported, but it has broken his mother's and sister's hearts, and while it gratified the morbid taste of the unkind, it has served no public or private good.

"A great responsibility rests upon you. You are XIX
the Master builder and you can delegate that power and responsibility to an apprentice no more justly than you could give a sharp knife to an infant and, when the child mutilates himself, say: 'See what the foolish child has done.'

"You have the very greatest opportunity to XX
serve, and therefore the greatest blessings are within your grasp. When I speak the words may find a hearing in a few hearts, but your words, whether kind or unkind, by the cunning

type and masterful press, go around the world. They may make for wrong or righteousness, for peace or war, for smiles or tears.

XI "I have observed that when great power falls into the hands of a good and great man he grows very considerate and kind in the use of that power. The Master himself, whose spirit still moves the civilized world, was the greatest teacher of kindness and the Prince of Peace."

Chapter 21

NE year had passed since the astronomers had announced the destruction of the world, and many changes had been wrought in the conduct of the people, one towards the other. People of all classes, conditions, sects, grew stronger in the thought of the Brotherhood and more helpful to each other.

II In the evening of that day, when John came to his shop, he found a woman there waiting to converse with him. She said unto John: "Do you know who I am?" and John answered, saying: "Yes, you are Martha, the wife of my youth. Long years have I waited and hoped for your coming, and I welcome you with the love which has never changed but has grown stronger as years have passed."

III And she said to him: "I must make full statement and confession to you." And John answered: "I have no questions to ask, and am not worthy to hear your statement and confession." And he took her in his arms, and kissed her, and said: "I must not be selfish in this, my

great joy, for within this very block there is great need of you.

"Within a short distance are two sick children, deserted by their mother; if you are well and strong I pray you go at once to their relief." And they went out of the shop together in the Master's business. IV

And on the next day John prepared his house to receive his wife; and when asked by his friends whom he expected to entertain he answered: "The lost is found. The dead is alive. The bride is coming to my house, and I shall be better prepared than ever for the Master's business." And John and Martha entered into their home and into the Master's business. V

And the next first day they were both busy attending to the sick and distressed in their neighborhood, and did not attend the Church of the Brotherhood until the following first day. VI

Meantime, distrust and rebellion arose among the brethren, and idle gossip kept busy the tongue of many who were sick with the disease called slander. VII

VIII The incipient stages of this disease are often spoken of as gossip, and John and Martha were kept so busy by reason of his work in his trade and in the Master's business that it was some days before the whisperings and idle gossip reached their ear; and when, on the first day, they went to the Church of the Brotherhood, John and Martha were informed of the wagging tongues of the busybodies, and of the breaking out of the dangerous sickness of slander within their midst.

IX On that day, the minister having preached a beautiful sermon on the subject of truthfulness and kindness, and having finished his discourse, John arose and said: "Will you pardon me for speaking? There is no sin save unkindness. The greatest unkindness is slander; therefore it is the greatest sin.

X "The thief who goes in the night to break through and steal is sick indeed; yet that sickness has something to commend itself. He risks his life and his liberty, whereas the one who scatters gossip and slander against another has none of the redeeming courage of the common

highwayman; for he who slanders robs his brother, without risk to himself, and without profit for any one.

"This disease is most dangerous, most contagious, and I fear sometimes epidemic. Its first symptoms are the sly whisperings, the nod of the head, the shrugging of the shoulders. In the first stages of the disease the victim for some days repeats the same words: 'Somebody said,' and 'I heard.' These two sayings are the natural parents of the demon 'Hearsay'; and should you ever meet this demon 'Hearsay' you will be shocked to observe that he is all ears and tongue; and he has been known to destroy families, and to bring on war between nations. He lives on floating rumors and idle gossip, and if we would keep this dread disease out of the Brotherhood let us speak of each other truthfully and kindly. XI

"It may help to drive out this demon 'Hearsay' from our Brotherhood by telling you part of my own experience. Some of the older brothers here may remember that in my youth I was married within this church to Martha, she who sits by me to-day. XII

XIII "Shortly after our marriage we were separated; that separation was largely assisted by 'Hearsay.' Several days ago she came back to me, and I have received her as the greatest blessing that has fallen to my lot. On the last Sunday we were both so busy in our neighborhood that we were not able to attend services here, and 'Hearsay,' passing by our door, fed himself on idle gossip until I fear the great sickness of slander has broken out amongst us.

XIV "We have too much to do before us to talk of my affairs and Martha's. I am happy that if it was necessary for this disease to break out in our Brotherhood it was directed against us. Since neither Martha nor I have been injured, the disease is forgiven, and must be forever forgotten."

XV And then the minister arose, and said: "I, too, have heard some of the gossip that has been passing within the last few days, and I desire to ask Martha a few questions." And John, answering, said: "I must say to my good brother, and to all, that there will be no more questions asked or answered, on the subject of Martha and myself. We have answered to each other, and on

the great day we will answer for each other. Did you not comprehend my statement that the demon 'Hearsay' feeds, lives, grows, and prospers upon idle curiosity and idle gossip?

XVI "For a week Martha has been busy night and day caring for little children deserted by a mother, sick with intemperance. She has succeeded where every one else has failed in bringing back this unhappy mother to her unfortunate children. In the few days she has been back in her home she has done more than any of the rest of us can do, in the Master's business.

XVII "The time has come when Martha takes her place again watching by the side of the sick. She needs help in this work. Who amongst you of the women here will go with her?" And every one of the women within the Church of the Brotherhood arose, and offered to go and serve with Martha; and turning to the minister, John said: "You see, my brother, all possible questions have been asked and answered." And among those who had volunteered to go with her, Martha selected Mary and also Hannah, the wife of the Master's cobbler ; and they went out in peace to the Master's work.

XVIII And Ralph, the Master's cobbler, said: "I can restrain myself no longer, and I want to speak to those who have slandered our brother John and his wife Martha." And John said: "I see the premonitory symptoms of sickness in our Master's cobbler, who preaches so well with his last and hammer; let us read the motto there on our wall." And John pointed to the sentiment: 'The bearer of unkind thoughts should be silent,' and turning, he pointed to another one, nearer the altar, which read: 'In this room we speak not ill of any one.'

XIX And John, smiling, said: "You will remember that when we agreed on that motto, you suggested there ought to be some room in our church where we could speak our mind; and we agreed that such a room might be made, just large enough for one man, in our coal cellar; but God be praised, and thanks to Brother Andrew, that room has been full of coal, ever since we hung this motto."

XX And Ralph said: "I was sick and I am cured. Thy faith, John, has made me whole. The new room to be built in the cellar, in size and shape,

hath too much the appearance of a coffin, to tempt me again." And in the joy and merriment that followed, the demon 'Hearsay' fled, looking for new pastures.

Chapter 22

HEREAFTER many of the churches adopted the plan of The Brotherhood, and John went to them from time to time, teaching the simple doctrine of kindness.

At one of these meetings, John had again been preaching on the salvation of the body, and as was the custom, he invited others to speak, or question him as to his words.

III On this day, one of the ministers arose and said: "I fear my brother takes too much account of the body, and too little account of the soul of man." And John, answering, said: "I have never seen a man's soul, but I have seen his body. Though man may measure the distance from star to star and whisper across the mighty waters on an unseen and mysterious current of the sky, yet so far, he has been unable to weigh, measure, or even see the soul of his brother.

IV "I agree with the brother that the soul is the precious part of my brother. It is the germ of the seed of life, and to attempt to get our brethren to think of their souls, with suffering

and hungry brains, is like unto sowing seeds on a barren rock.

V "Suppose the owner of your home should put you with your family on the street in a storm. Two men come your way; one offers you a tract of our church as to the plan of salvation, and offers up a prayer; the other secures shelter for you and yours, helps you to find employment, and is kind. Which one of these two men has done most for your soul? Which one would you believe had best interpreted the story of the Master?

VI "The first prayed for you, the other prayed and helped to answer his own prayer. The first one preached a sermon you soon forgot. The second one preached a sermon you could never forget.

VII "I seek not to avoid questions by questioning, but where is thy soul? Has it its seat in the brain? Then remember that the brain dies unless supported by food and circulation. Is it in the heart? Then remember that the heart will cease to beat, unless nourished. Is the soul of man a tenant in this house of flesh and blood, to go to the Father at the end of its lease? If so, how mindful we should be of the house that holds so sacred a tenant.

VIII "What say you, if thy brother's house is consumed by fire or carried away by the flood; would you let him sleep in the storm, and still say you were working for the salvation of his body?

IX "We see to-day the bodies of our brothers perishing for want of shelter and food. Would my brother say, never mind their bodies, let us work and pray for their souls?

X "I verily believe, if your church was opened to-night, and a poor brother could sleep in one of these cushioned pews, and he should know that this was the Master's house, and that you were servants of the Master, you would do more for his soul than you could do with a thousand sermons.

XI "I pray you understand me; in our Brotherhood, we would not dispense with service in sermon, song, and prayer, for a well fed body has a hungry soul, and seeks the bread of life everlasting; but no one seeks this bread of life, while suffering for the want of bread for his stomach.

XII "It is our rule in The Brotherhood, not to preach on the salvation of the soul until we have made as comfortable as we can, the body and mind of every one within our gates.

"Only last Sunday we had no sermon at all; XIII
we were too busy attending to the pressing needs
of the bodies there present. Our preacher, with
the Master's cobbler, helped to feed a dozen. He
said he felt as if he had preached a dozen good
sermons, and so he had, for every sandwich he
made was a sermon, and a good one.

"I am for the salvation of the bodies of our XIV
brothers. I once told my brothers how I looked
through one glass and saw the foot of an insect,
and through another I looked at the stars. I
could not see below the power of one nor above
the power of the other.

"So when I contemplate the soul of man, it is XV
beyond my understanding; but with my naked
eye, I see his body, and know some of its needs.
It is a wonderful body. My brother Charles has
studied it for forty years, and yet he tells me that
almost daily he is lost in wonder and admiration
for its mechanism, its beauty, and its usefulness.
He tells me it is a fit tenement for an ever living
soul, and if so he is right; let us take good care
of the house, lest the tenant suffer by our
neglect."

Chapter 23

N the next day John was sitting upon his chest of tools at the noon hour, and was surrounded by his fellow workmen and others who came to question him. One complained that he had given to the poor, and that he had not even received thanks for his charity, and John answered, saying: "The Master said, 'He who giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord.' I believe that he who gives to get, seeks usury and lendeth to selfishness and will receive back neither principal nor interest. Neither love, nor friendship have need of a bookkeeper."

II And in answer to many questions put to him at that hour, he answered: "Happy is the man who is kind.

III "Happy is the man who does that duty which is next to his hand, for he has wisdom to know that he can lift more of the burdens near him than of those he cannot reach.

IV "Happy is he who believes in his fellow, for it is more blessed to be deceived in some things than to be suspicious in all things.

"Happy is he who communes with his Maker in the solitude of nature. Blessed is he who can also commune with his Maker in the midst of his fellows, for he has wisdom and kindness to consider his brother's weakness, as he does the dwarfed tree or the withered bush. V

"Happy is the man who is never scolded, and blessed is he who never scolds. VI

"He who rocks the boat is kinder and wiser than he who circulates slander in jest. VII

"The tongue is mightier than the sword. VIII

"Discretion is the only master of the tongue, and flies out of the window when alcohol comes in at the door. IX

"Blessed is he who hath wisdom to fight without quarrelling. X

"My brother, you ask for prayers for your sick family. I visited your house this day. You need an honest plumber to help answer your prayers. XI

"If your misfortune is not your own making, you have much to be thankful for. If it is your fault, you have more to be thankful for, since XII

you can prevent that misfortune from coming again.

XIII "Neither vulgarity nor profanity is found in the vocabulary of a gentleman.

XIV "Words of a man make his shadow; his acts make the man himself. Judge not a man's stature by his shadow without knowing his relation to the sun.

XV "Liberty that is given to you is slavery.

XVI "You say that my dog loves me for the sake of his food. If so, he acts the best of his nature. Let us emulate him.

XVII "To the unafraid adversity is the mother of fortitude. To those who fear, it is often the father of despair.

XVIII "Hide not your pearls for fear there may be swine in the neighborhood.

XIX "Be neither swelled nor puffed up by wealth or honors, that in the loss thereof you may not shrink.

XX "Well directed curiosity discovers new worlds, but her idle sister is the maker of gossip and the hand-maiden of slander."

A brother said: "You speak as if there were a difference between being 'blessed' and being 'happy.' See, I am happy to eat the dinner my wife prepared for me. Am I not also blessed?" XXI

And John replied: "If you are likewise as thoughtful of her supper, and that which goes with it, you will be blessed. You must be both happy and useful to be blessed." XXII

A fellow workman said: "Have you seen a man's soul?" John said: "I see you eat, and believe you have a stomach, though I never saw it." XXIII

"Have you seen a man feed his soul?" And John replied: "Last night I saw a man help a sick brother home, and divide his wages with the poor family. He was feeding something more sacred than his body. I am as certain that he has a soul as that you have a stomach." XXIV

And one of the Brothers spoke, giving praise to some, and harsh and unkind criticism to others. And John rebuked him, saying: "You should speak of a man's virtues as if he were living; of his faults as if he were dead, thus avoiding the dangers of both flattery and slander." XXV

Chapter 24

CERTAIN lawyer and doctor both of learning and great wit, stopped to hear John at the next noon, and sought to entrap him with cunning questions as to who and what his Master was.

II And John said: "I see you seek to trap my faith and make light of my Master. You ask who was his father, and who was his mother. I fear me next you will ask, 'Wore he shoes or sandals? Was he dark or of light skin?' Go, my inquisitive brother, to your schools of philosophy, where they have spent too much time answering childish questions, while neglecting the Master's brothers.

III "My Master is the master of the world of right and is your Master, whether you will or no. He is the greatest lawyer and advocate of all time. He defended the woman taken in adultery, without fee. (He that is without sin, let him cast the first stone.) He confessed the fact and the law and saved his client by an appeal

to the executioner. Have you done as well? He healed the sick without knife or drug. Have you, my doctor brother, done as well? My Master spoke of the widow's mite; and in the realm of things worth while, he made the little copper coin outshine the rich man's gold. He pleaded for the poor in purse, and for the bankrupt in hope. He was the poet of all time—not the declaimer of lines which jingle at the ends, to please the ear, but the speaker of simple words, singing in harmony with truth, inspiring us to unselfish service. He opened our eyes to the beauty of the lily, and the shallowness of the decorations of kings. By simple parable he reached the untrained mind, and taught the lowly the deep truth of an everliving God. He blessed little children, and held up their simplicity and purity for us to imitate. He comforted the distressed, mingled his tears with the afflicted, and in his tenderness, saw an excuse for the folly and sickness of all mankind. He drove out the money changers, and stopped the jingle of gold in the temple of the Most High; and lifted to the heart of God the falling sparrow.

IV "His parables were wiser than the proverbs of Solomon and his sermon on the Mount silences the psalms of David, and the singers of all time. His golden rule is the highest expression of right, and the goal to which all civilization tends. His birth gave a glory to homeless love, a halo to poverty. His death — would that I could speak with the tongues of angels — His death was the acme of unselfishness, the very height of sacrifice, the tragedy of all history, and the hope of all the world."

Chapter 25

OT many days thereafter John came home to Martha, sick with a fever, and for many days laid on a bed of pain and suffering. In his delirium, he spoke often to his brothers, calling them by name, and urging them on to continued service.

II On the seventh day he came out of his wanderings and found Martha at his side, holding his hand. Feeble of body, but strong and clear of mind, he spoke to Martha, saying: "How long have I been sick?" And she, weeping for joy, said: "Be silent, John dear, you have been wandering in your mind for seven days, now you will soon be well." And John answered her: "Yes, I am nearly well now.

III "I understand my pain is gone, because my poor body has surrendered its fight for longer life. How kind the Father is to give me this painless time to speak good-bye to you, my love. My voice seems weak, but my spirit sees clearly all the past, and is rapt in expectancy of the future.

IV "If this is the end, and there is no life beyond, I salute the Everlasting Good and am thankful

for what I have had. Remember, Martha, I doubt not. Neither am I afraid. I go to a friendly city. The Master is there.

"Tell my dear minister that Brother Lewis will pay the next month's rent for Sarah and her children. V

"Has there been any sickness in the Brotherhood?" And Martha said: "Not an unkind word has been spoken." And John said: "Truly the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. VI

"Has the sickness of fear left them all?" "Yes," answered Mary, "they have forgotten fear, in caring for each other." VII

"Have we paid our neighbors that which we owe, and is there sufficient to provide for you?" And Martha said: "Yes, all is well." VIII

Then John said: "There was some unfinished work on my bench," and Martha told him that his brother Mark had finished the work and delivered it on the day promised. IX

"And my shop; the bench, the tools and all?" and Martha said: "All are in order, dear one, as you would have them." And John said: "How kind you all are." X

XI It was the hour of sunset and Martha lifted his head and turned him so he could see the western sky. "How beautiful," said John; "see, Martha, the sun is setting, but it will rise again. This is my faith; it will rise again."

XII And so John the Unafraid was prepared to go out from this life, not in fear but in faith, with open arms, and smiling face, as one who goeth out to welcome the coming of his most beloved.

XIII Upon the streets and within the house, many gathered, waiting news from John the Unafraid. While at his bedside, Martha his wife, and the wife of the Master's cobbler, kept in silent prayer the watches of the night.

XIV And when the morning came, Martha said: "He still lives, and his breathing is as natural as that of a sleeping child."

XV And so John the Unafraid came out of the valley of the Shadow, and when strong to speak, said: "I thought ere this to have solved the mysteries of Death; I must labor still with the greater mysteries of Life."

The Church of the Brotherhood goes on. Come XVI
ye powerful of all the earth, kings and rulers; come ye commanders of armies and navies; come ye captains of wealth and industry; and come ye sick children of the Father, ye brothers of the Master, for you are needed in this Church. You need not withdraw from your church, but serve more where you are. One kind word to a suffering brother, even the least of them, puts you in full communion. No tribute of pew rent is demanded, and no creed must be acknowledged. Promise only to serve the Good, as you understand it. The Brotherhood is weak in theology, but strong in religion. Forgetting wealth in the search for values, turning our backs on the shadows and facing the substance, putting behind us the tinsels of display, looking forward to the things worth while. Would you know the way to this church? Speak kindly to the next brother you meet; and if he be not sick, he will point you the way. No matter how dark the night, there is a light still burning in the window, and the door of The Church of the Brotherhood is never locked.

The End

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